

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 23, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 24, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1766

Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian

February 14, 2014

An act to add Section 16523 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to foster care.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1766, as amended, Nazarian. Foster youth: transitional housing pilot project.

Existing law establishes the Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) program, under which counties provide payments to foster care providers on behalf of qualified children in foster care. The program is funded by a combination of federal, state, and county funds, with moneys from the General Fund being continuously appropriated to pay for the state's share of AFDC-FC costs.

Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services to adopt regulations to govern county transitional housing placement programs that provide supervised housing services to persons at least 16 years of age and not more than 18 years of age, with specified exceptions, who satisfy the requirements of the AFDC-FC program, are in out-of-home placement, as specified, and are participating in, or have successfully completed, an independent living program. Existing law requires that in order for a facility to participate in a transitional housing placement program, the facility shall obtain certification from the county

department of social services or county probation department that the facility satisfies certain criteria.

This bill would authorize the County of Los Angeles, in conjunction with the University of California ~~at Los Angeles and First Star, Incorporated, or a related,~~ *a local education agency, and a nonprofit child advocacy organization*, to participate in a pilot project to establish the University-Affiliated ~~First Star~~ High School Academy, under the administration of the State Department of Social Services. The bill would require that the academy be licensed as a transitional housing placement provider, but would specify certain alternative requirements for the project including, among others, that the academy serve foster children who are attending high school and are at least ~~13~~ 14 years of age. *The bill would require the county to ensure that permanent placement options, including reunification, adoption, and the establishment of permanent guardianships, remain the priority placements for children who are eligible to participate in the academy.* The bill would require the department to prepare a report evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot project and to submit it to the Legislature by January 1, 2020. The bill would make legislative findings and declarations as to the necessity of a special statute for the County of Los Angeles.

This bill would provide that the continuous appropriation for the state's share of the AFDC-DF costs would not be made for purposes of implementing the bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature find and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) Only 50 percent of foster youth graduate from high school.
- 4 (b) Only 3 percent of former foster youth graduate from a
- 5 four-year college, even though more than 70 percent express a
- 6 desire to earn a college degree.
- 7 (c) In Los Angeles County, 24 percent of former foster youth
- 8 will have experienced homelessness within two years of leaving
- 9 the foster care system.
- 10 (d) Approximately 60 percent of young women in foster care
- 11 will become pregnant by 20 years of age.

1 (e) Within two years of leaving the foster care system, 64 percent
2 of young men and 30 percent of young women are incarcerated.

3 (f) With approximately 5,200 youth aging out of foster care
4 every year in California, the cost to state and local governments
5 of homelessness, incarceration, and indigence of former foster
6 youth is \$165 million per year.

7 (g) The college environment has a holistic effect on students,
8 and impacts not only the academic but also the psychosocial aspects
9 of students' development.

10 (h) Large colleges and universities have specialists in the areas
11 of medicine, law, psychology, sociology, communication, and
12 education who can greatly augment the services provided to foster
13 youth by county child welfare agencies.

14 (i) The existing First Star UCLA Bruin Guardian Scholar
15 Summer Academy *annually* offers four, month-long—~~annual~~
16 residential summer programs on the campus of the University of
17 California, Los Angeles, to foster youth in each of the four years
18 of their high-school education, with at least one additional day of
19 instruction per month during the remainder of each year. The
20 academy consists of daylong scheduled classes, programs, and
21 activities that provide two to four undergraduate academic credits
22 each summer session, as well as the social and emotional
23 preparation necessary to flourish in college and the skills necessary
24 to gain acceptance into college and successfully transition into
25 adulthood.

26 (j) Extending the First Star UCLA Bruin Guardian Scholar
27 Summer Academy to a year-round placement option would allow
28 foster youth to fully realize the benefits of this college environment.

29 SEC. 2. Section 16523 is added to the Welfare and Institutions
30 Code, to read:

31 16523. (a) The department shall implement a pilot project in
32 the County of Los Angeles, at the option of the county, in
33 conjunction with the University of California ~~at Los Angeles and~~
34 ~~First Star, Incorporated, or a related, a local education agency,~~
35 ~~and a~~ nonprofit child advocacy organization, to establish the
36 University-Affiliated ~~First Star~~ High School Academy. The
37 academy shall be licensed as a transitional housing placement
38 provider pursuant to this article and Section 1559.110 of the Health
39 and Safety Code, but shall include all of the following components:

1 (1) The academy shall serve foster children who ~~are attending~~
2 ~~high school and are at least 13~~ *meet all of the following*
3 *requirements:*

4 (A) *Currently attending high school.*

5 (B) *Have attained 14 years of age, but who do not exceed the*
6 *age limit specified in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section*
7 *16522.1.*

8 (C) *Have been determined by the county to have a very low*
9 *possibility of reunifying with their parents or guardians or*
10 *achieving a permanent placement.*

11 (2) The academy shall be limited to a program described in
12 paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 16522, however,
13 residential facilities for participants and supervisory adults may
14 ~~include consist of configurations including, but that include, but~~
15 *are not limited to, dormitory, multioccupant, clustered, hub, and*
16 *other housing layouts and arrangements as are commonly found*
17 *in a college or university environment.*

18 (3) The program staffing ratio of staff member to client shall
19 not exceed one to three.

20 (4) *Participants in the academy shall attend a local public high*
21 *school that is not located on the premises of the academy.*

22 (b) *The county shall enter into a memorandum of understanding*
23 *with the nonprofit child advocacy organization, local education*
24 *agency, and the University of California, regarding the operation*
25 *of the academy and the enrollment of academy participants in an*
26 *appropriate public high school. The memorandum of understanding*
27 *shall contain, at a minimum, all of the following:*

28 (1) *A requirement that academy participants attend a public*
29 *high school with close geographic proximity to the academy.*

30 (2) *A description of the standards for training the staff and*
31 *volunteers who will interact with the academy participants.*

32 ~~(b)~~

33 (c) The academy shall be reimbursed at 160 percent of the
34 monthly rate specified in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of
35 subdivision (a) of Section 11403.3.

36 ~~(e)~~

37 (d) The department shall prepare a report evaluating the
38 effectiveness of the pilot project and shall submit the report to the
39 appropriate *policy* committees of the Legislature by January 1,
40 2020.

1 (1) This subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1,
2 2024, pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code.

3 (2) The report to be submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall
4 be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government
5 Code.

6 *(e) If the county opts to implement the academy, the county shall*
7 *ensure that permanent placement options, including reunification,*
8 *adoption, and the establishment of permanent guardianships,*
9 *remain the priority placements for children who are eligible to*
10 *participate in the academy.*

11 *(f) The academy shall meet all other requirements for a*
12 *transitional housing placement provider, except those that conflict*
13 *with the provisions of this section.*

14 SEC. 3. No appropriation pursuant to Section 15200 of the
15 Welfare and Institutions Code shall be made for purposes of this
16 act.

17 SEC. 4. The Legislature finds and declares that a special law
18 is necessary and that a general law cannot be made applicable
19 within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV of the California
20 Constitution because of the unique circumstances in the County
21 of Los Angeles with regard to the existing First Star UCLA Bruin
22 Guardian Scholar Summer Academy.